

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on May 19, 2000, The Arthritis Pain Center, Incorporated (APC), pled guilty to a one-count criminal Information in U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri, St. Louis, MO, for submitting a false claim to the Government.

Previously, on May 11, 2000, a Federal Grand Jury in St. Louis, MO, returned a 10-count indictment against Dr. Rachna Mehra, M.D., and APC for allegedly submitting false claims to the Government. As a result of the guilty plea by APC, the indictments against Dr. Mehra and APC were dismissed. In accordance with the plea agreement, the one-count charge was filed against APC.

The guilty plea was the result of an investigation which disclosed APC submitted false claims for payment to Medicare, TRICARE, and private insurance companies, claiming that Dr. Mehra, the owner and operator of APC, had personally provided services, or that Dr. Mehra was present while a non-physician provided the services. In fact, the investigation revealed Dr. Mehra was actually out of town when the services were provided. APC agreed to pay \$50,000 restitution to TRICARE, Medicare, and private insurance companies. In addition, APC will pay a \$10,000 fine, and \$25,000 investigative costs.

Sentencing is scheduled for August 4, 2000.